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SEC. BYSIEWICZ DELIVERS HEALTH CARE BILL TO GOVERNOR

BYSIEWICZ AND DONOVAN'S PLAN COULD SAVE SMALL BUSINESSES, MUNICIPALITIES AND NONPROFITS MILLIONS

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz officially hand-delivered to Governor M. Jodi Rell H.B. No. 5536, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership. The legislation allows municipalities, small businesses and non-profits to voluntarily join the state employee health insurance plan, creating a large pool of insured lives leading to increased bargaining power and lower costs.

"It is no secret that in this time of economic uncertainty small businesses and municipalities are struggling with their bottom lines," said Bysiewicz. "Communities across Connecticut are begging for tax relief. By expanding the purchasing power we can save taxpayer dollars and drive down health care costs for the small business community that is responsible for more than 90% of all new jobs in our state. Bysiewicz continued, "Governor, if you are serious about expanding quality, affordable health care that will cut costs for small businesses, if you are serious about giving cities and towns a break, you will sign into law the Health Care Partnership!"

The sheer volume of the state's pool of more than 200,000 people puts Connecticut in a strong position when it comes time to negotiate rates. For the 2007-2008 year there is a 0.0 percent increase in the state's health insurance costs for employees and retirees.

Over the past four months, the bill's author, House Majority Leader Christopher G. Donovan, and Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz have traveled across Connecticut

conducting roundtables for small business owners, elected officials, and not-for-profit organizations.

“The overwhelming message we heard from small business entrepreneurs was that health care costs are out of control and are hurting their business. Many are faced with the difficult choice of either dropping health coverage for their employees or laying people off,” said Bysiewicz, chief business registrar for the State of Connecticut.

Small businesses are responsible for creating more than 90% of all new jobs in Connecticut, yet with skyrocketing health costs, more than half of the state’s uninsured population – about 180,000 people – are employees of small business.

“If Governor Rell is serious about job creation and sustainable economic development, she must sign this bill,” said Bysiewicz, “The Governor has fifteen days to sign this into law. The clock is ticking.”